Halifax League: Master-ful performance by Hussain

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Amir Hussain

Amir Hussain made an instant impact in the Halifax Junior Masters as he won the competition at his first attempt, winning both his semi-final and final 3-0.

Victory over top seed Sam Clayton was a gritty affair, but ultimately Hussain's consistency on both wings proved to be the difference.

In what was a typically exciting event, the 16 juniors who took part all gave their all before just Clayton and Hussasin were left standing.

Leading up to the final, Both Hussain's and Clayton's biggest scares came in the group stages, with the pair beating Jonny Heslop and Alex Shaw respectively in the fifth. Ironically, neither progressed through the groups following defeats to Jake Clarke and Lewis Palmer.

Ultimately, the top eight seeds made the quarter-finals, with the only shock on the rankings being Jake Clarke's victory over Ollie Hill.

Clayton disposed of Hill by a comfortable 3-0 scoreline whilst Hussain impressively dispatched Ben Fillingham 3-0, with Fillingham's highest score being just five points in a single game, an impressive stat given his superb first year in Halifax Division 1.

The other two quarter-finals were closer affairs. Third seed Fraser Riley prevailed in an entertaining game with Waqas Ahmad, eventually winning 3-1.

However, the game of the night, and ultimately, game of the tournament, was between Clarke and Palmer. The two battled out an epic five-end thriller, with very little between the two players. After twists and turns aplenty, Palmer saved five match points to take it 16-14 in the fifth, and book his place in his first ever Masters semi-final.

Palmer couldn't replicate that performance in the last four as he was defeated 3-0 by Clayton. Nerves were evident within the youngster, with the more experienced Clayton playing an efficient game to progress to the showpiece.

Meanwhile, Hussain was still going about his business quietly as he comfortably moved past Riley. Despite Riley taking part in a number of entertaining exchanges, he was drawn into playing away from the court, as a result playing into Hussain's hands.

That paved the way for the final that, unquestionably, was desired by most of the crowd. The first end reached deuce, with the whole crowd and those playing on tables around the middle table coming to a standstill. They were treated to an enthralling display, with both players raising the stakes in a number of long rallies. Crucially, Hussain took it 18-16, with Clayton faulting to hand the game to his opponent.

From there on Hussain looked in control as errors crept into Clayton's game. Meanwhile Hussain, who comes to the Friday night class from Oldham, looked calm and composed, his experience of playing in National finals, and winning some on the way, ultimately proving to be the difference.

* Please note: Steve is running a Mystery Doubles event on Sunday December 28, 10am start. Please inform your team members.

Results from the last fortnight

Sealed Handicap Cup preliminary round
HxTTC Evergreens (+108) 346 HxTTC Panthers 367
Diamonds (+252) 329 Greetland Soc B 378
BT 357 HxTTC Keighley Nomads (+99) 377
Sapphires (+161) 372 HxTTC Ramsbridge 374

Sealed Handicap Cup first round draw:
HxTTC Hotshots v Amethyst
Aquamarine v HxTTC Team G
HxTTC Rainbow 2 v HxTTC Warriors
HxTTC Red Press v Old Town Hounds
Emeralds v HxTTC Leopards
HxTTC Panthers v HxTTC Central 1
HxTTC Jokers v HxTTC Netamatix
HxTTC YMEN v HxTTC Central 3
HxTTC Ovenden Sports v HxTTC Rams
HxTTC Hermits v HxTTC Grasshoppers
HxTTC Dolphins v HxTTC Oakland Raiders
HxTTC Tribal 1 v HxTTC Tradesmen
Sowerby 2 v HxTTC Ramsbridge
HxTTC Central 2 v HxTTC Tribal 2
HxTTC Keighley Nomads v Greetland Social B
Ruby v Old Town Robins
Matches to be played week commencing January 19, 2015.

Division Two
HxTTC Keighley Nomads (S Cyhanko 3, D Briggs 3, R Yorke 0) 6 HxTTC Ovenden Sports (S Mohammed 1, T Allington 1, P McMullen 1) 3
HxTTC Tribal 1 (C Baggott 2, J Hill 0, M Bush 2) 4 HxTTC Team G (B Gee 2, J Dawber 2, R Gee 1) 5
HxTTC Central 2 (S Forbes 1, E Greenwood 2, S Thomas 2) 5 HxTTC Rams (D Stretton 2, D Melbourne 2, R McNamara 0) 4

Division Three
Old Town Hounds (D Williamson 0, G Harris 0, P Dean 0) 0 Sowerby 2 (A Whiteley 3, J Korner 3, P Parry 3) 9
Sowerby 2 (A Whiteley 3, A Shaw 2, P Parry 3) 8 HxTTC Netamatix (M Halliday 1, I McCondach 0, J Wasilewski 0) 1

Barry Snowden
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